

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

DATE DISTR. Jun 1953

NO. OF PAGES 4 50X1

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW) 50X1

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REPORT NO.

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3. In 1946, a "Friend's Club" (Japanese literal translation) was organized in each camp and was headed by a political agent. Many methods were used to persuade the prisoners to join this club. The most effective plan was to give the prisoners newspapers, which were then used to roll their cigarettes, inasmuch as all available paper had been used, including dictionaries, diaries, and personal papers. Therefore, many joined the Friend's Club merely to receive a newspaper. The newspaper given the prisoners came from Khabarovsk, was printed in Japanese, and was solely Soviet propaganda. The propaganda was well organized and informative. This paper was distributed throughout Siberia. At first the paper was issued twice weekly, later tri-weekly, and eventually was distributed four times a week. It was the most sought-after commodity, and even though all were undernourished, some prisoners even traded bread for pieces of newspaper. Articles from this newspaper were read and discussed at the meetings of the Friend's Club. All members of the club were called upon by the political agent for their impressions and views. In this manner, the agent was able to classify the members as to their political thinking to determine those who could be most easily swayed toward Communism, or to determine what drastic measures would be necessary to successfully convert those who showed no interest in Communism.
4. Shortly after the Friend's Club was organized, the name was changed to the "Democratic Group." At this time, the political agent changed from his tough and ruthless pose to an attitude of tolerance and mildness. At no time did he or his subordinates attempt to force Communism on the prisoners, but they very cleverly and underhandedly made life miserable for those who would not accept the doctrines of Communism. Special privileges were given to those who showed a willingness to adopt the Soviet doctrines, and extra duties were given to those who refused to cooperate.
5. The head of the Democratic Group in each camp was also Chairman of the Central Committee. The Central Committee was made up of the following departments: Political Department, Welfare Department, Civil Department (which included recreation, amusement, and entertainment), and the Propaganda Department. The Chairman of the Central Committee and the department heads formed a General Committee (Japanese literal translation). The General Committee was comprised of "actives," hard-core Communists who had been tested and proven loyal. There was at least one active in each squad of 15 to 40 men. The active was the one who policed the squads, and the prisoners who later agreed to cooperate acted as his assistants. During the transition period from the Friend's Club to the Democratic Group, the actives were unknown. Squad meetings were held at every opportunity - before breakfast, during waiting periods, lunch hours, and every evening.
6. A youth group, in which members had to be under 25 years of age, was organized within the Democratic Group. The maximum age limit was later changed to 30. At first, the youth group was a department of the Central Committee, but later it became a separate group. However, it was under the supervision of the Chairman of the Central Committee. Particular emphasis was placed on the youth group, which received special attention in all matters. Officers of this group were delegated more authority than the officers of the older group. The indoctrination program was organized to appeal to the youth. Members of the youth group received badges of distinction, which were worn with great pride, and which rated special attention. The youth group was encouraged to do much singing. The songs were either fighting songs or those depicting heroes. Special meetings were held for this group and they were told tales of great exploits of the USSR and of Soviet leaders. The worldly gains to be made in which they were to play the leading role were strongly stressed. USSR history, the basic theories of Communism, and other subjects which might have been considered dull by the youth group, and which were ordinarily given to all other prisoners, were omitted in the indoctrination of the youth. Oratorical contests were held in the youth group and all were encouraged to compete. The youth were repeatedly assured that they were "the ones" who would lead the future revolution in Japan to drive out the prevalence of US influence.

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7. In 1946, a District school was established at Hormoli where the headquarters of the Democratic Group and the Central Committee were located, and where the department heads of these groups were educated. The course lasted from two to six months and in some cases for eight or nine months. Later, a large regional school was established at Khabarovsk. While the officials of the departments attended these courses, their deputies were placed in charge of the camps. After the return of the department heads to the camps, their deputies attended and then the actives were compelled to attend. All who attended the school gave detailed accounts of their experiences to the entire camp. These reports seemed very childish to the better-educated prisoners, but to the others, this well-planned propaganda was extremely effective. Reports were given of the good food, of the many banquets, and of the visits to the homes of typical Soviet families. The wonderful life of people of the Soviet Union, the exceptionally nice treatment given the prisoners by these people, and visits to different cities were elaborated upon. Many examples were given of the democratic life in the USSR such as the following: A man interposed himself in a line waiting for a bus. Those in line had the authority to conduct a court and immediately did so. The sentence imposed was that he could not ride any bus that day but would have to walk. The prisoners stated further that there were no guards, and they could come and go as they pleased. They were not treated as prisoners in any way. The prisoners were exposed to this propaganda each time a group returned from school, the purpose being to instill in the reactionists the need to accept Communism for the benefit of their future security.
8. After the Democratic Group was organized in each camp, the head of the Central Committee held Kangaroo courts for even the least minor offense.

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9. At Gorin, the discrimination was more strict. The reactionists were given all the hard labor, the extra jobs, and the most disagreeable jobs, such as cleaning the latrines. If a train arrived on Sunday (all trains were unloaded immediately because of the shortage of rolling stock), the reactionists had to do the unloading. Special privileges which were given members of the Democratic Group were constantly being flaunted before the reactionists. Periodically, an opportunity was given the reactionists to voluntarily "confess their sins." A public questioning and re-questioning of the reactionist was required, after which he was given an opportunity to prove his faithfulness before he would be accepted as a "tovarich." The term tovarich [Japanese phonetic spelling] is a word meaning "comrade." By 1947, the discrimination between the reactionists and the members within the Democratic Group was so great and obvious that many prisoners were being swayed toward the Democratic Group.
- less than 25% of the prisoners remained as reactionists. In the spring of 1948, the first prisoners to be repatriated from the Gorin camp were the most ardent members of the Democratic Group. all members of the Democratic Group would be repatriated by 1949,

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10. The second winter 1946-1947 the prisoners received the first issue of clothing since their imprisonment. A great deal of discrimination was shown here also. All the "faithfuls" members of the Democratic Group were issued new and fitted clothing. The remaining prisoners were given either left-overs or old clothes turned in by the faithfuls. The prisoners who had been "strung up" (defendants at Kangaroo courts, etc) were given anything that was left - used, worn-out clothing, shoes several sizes too large, etc. The expression "strung up" is taken from a term used for the old-time gallows.
11. After the first year, the prisoners were given norms in their work. The norm was a specified amount of work for one day. No money was paid the prisoners for making their norm, but for example, if a prisoner produced 120% over his norm, he would earn from 15 to 20 rubles, depending on the type of work. In 1947, one ruble would purchase 350 grams of bread or 50 grams of mahorka (tobacco) or 10 cigarettes. Soybean oil could be purchased in place of butter, but it was very expensive. Sugar was two rubles a pound. Although prisoners earning money in this manner were supposed to be paid each month, payments were held up for several months. After these payments had been made, currency was sometimes deflated so that the PW's could not buy much for their money. Many of the PW's who could produce 120% a month over their norm would be moved to another camp where the work was more difficult. Upon such a move, any previous bonus earned would be lost. If a prisoner accepted Communism, he received jobs on which it was possible to produce over the norm, and thus earn money. Reactionists were unable to reach their norms in most cases, because of the more difficult jobs assigned to them.
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12. [redacted] there were approximately 1500 prisoners in one camp alone, out of which approximately 800 were repatriated. In the [redacted] Easternmost area of the Soviet Union), there were approximately 50 to 60 thousand PW's [redacted] the prisoners were told that if the US had fulfilled her agreement, the USSR would now have ships in which to repatriate more prisoners; [redacted]
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- [redacted] The educated Japanese prisoner realized how ridiculous this excuse was. Also, the Soviets kept trying to force more work from the prisoners by telling them that the US was planning to invade the USSR and that if the work on the railroad was completed sooner than scheduled, it would help to eliminate this great threat.
13. When repatriation time came, which was either in the spring or fall of the year 50X1 [redacted], the Chairman of the Central Committee, department heads, officials of the youth group, as well as many actives refused to be repatriated. These PW's said they had a very important mission to perform, and that they would not voluntarily accept repatriation until their mission was accomplished.

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